

Red Wire Pasture, Lime Kiln

0.1 mile east of the Colorado River, 1.3 miles south
of Leaday townsite, 0.1 miles west of the Leaday-Hill Road
Voss vicinity
Coleman County
Texas

HAER No. TX-14

HAER
TEX,
42-VOS.V,
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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Location: Located 0.1 mile east of the Colorado River, 1.3 miles south of Leaday townsite, 0.1 mile west of the Leaday-Hill Road, Voss vicinity, Coleman County, Texas

UTM: 14.436394.3490462
Quad: Leaday

Date of Construction: Unknown

Present Owner: Commerce State Bank of Kansas City (trustee for Jo Zach Miller IV, et. al.); permanent easement granted in 1986 to Colorado River Municipal Water District

Present Use: Abandoned

Significance: In a region where vernacular architecture was frequently of limestone construction laid up with lime mortar, and where lime kilns would usually be numerous, this was the only site which could be positively identified as a kiln. It is significant because of the integral part such industrial structures played in the construction of a number of sites in the vicinity.

Historian: Gus Hamblett, Texas A&M University, October 1989

1. HISTORY

A. An Overview of Historical Context

For the general historical overview which places the property in the context of the development of cattle ranching at the confluence of the Colorado and Concho rivers, see HABS No. TX-3350.

B. The Site in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

The lime kiln is on a low bank of the Colorado River on the present-day Day-Miller Ranch. It is located on land which was patented to the school commissioners of Fort Bend County in 1848 and sold by them to William H. Day in 1878. [1] This very large tract of Coleman County is part of an earlier Day Ranch, which comprised many thousands of acres, which stretched from Grape Creek to the north, Elm Creek to the east, and the Colorado River on the south and west. The site is on a portion of the ranch which Day fenced and which became known locally as the Red Wire Pasture. [2] At Day's death in 1881, ownership passed to his widow, Mabel Doss Day. Mrs. Day was left with a infant child, Willie Mabel Day and heavy debts on the ranch. One of Mrs. Day's schemes for economic recovery was the subdivision of the ranch into a series of tenant farms and the foundation of a town to serve the new population. At her death in 1906, her daughter, now Mrs. Tom Padgitt, was forced to sell a large portion of the ranch to the Miller banking family of Belton; the remaining Padgitt lands were hereinafter called the Day-Padgitt Ranch; and the Miller lands, which included the Red Wire Pasture, were called the Day-Miller Ranch. [3] Together, the Padgitts and Millers immediately began enacting the subdivision of the ranches and the building of the new town of Leaday on land which straddled both the Day-Padgitt and Day-Miller ranches. The Millers finished the new ranch headquarters house begun in 1904. The Padgitts' and Millers' efforts to establish efficient tenant farms resulted in a series of improvements to the land, including the construction of a number of concrete silos across the ranch in the years just before World War I.

The tenant system failed for a number of reasons. Tenant families began to leave the region in the 1920s and 1930s, and the little new town of Leaday began to fade away. [4] In 1936-37, the various and numerous little vicinity schools, including the schools on the Day-Padgitt and Day-Miller ranches, were consolidated. Several of these were consolidated with a school district at the community of Mozelle, three miles to the east. Children were now transported in school buses across old ranch roads improved with a series of new Works Progress Administration bridges constructed during the period of 1936-1941. [5] Aside from these last improvements, no significant building projects have been conducted on the adjoining ranches for almost fifty years. The tenant lands were eventually reintegrated into the original ranches and, by the mid-1950s, a configuration of land use and property ownership was resumed, comparable to the period when William Day first began to fence the open range. [6] *(For a more comprehensive history of the Day Ranch and vicinity and for biographical information on William and Mabel Day and the Millers, see HABS No. TX-3351, Mabel Doss Day Lea House; HABS No. TX-3362, Leaday Townsite; HABS No. TX-3363, Day-Padgitt Ranch Tenant House; and HAER No. TX-15, Elm Creek Silo. For a discussion on new bridges on the Day-Miller Ranch, see HAER Nos. TX-16, TX-17, and TX-18, W.P.A. Bridges; and HAER No. TX-20, Leaday Crossing.)*

The construction date of the lime kiln or its period of use is unknown, but it could have served any of the abovementioned building projects. The location of the kiln is less than one mile from the Creswell-Rozzle house, constructed of stone in two phases, 1880 and 1893, on the Creswell's Bend

Ranch, which adjoined the original Day Ranch to the west (see HABS No. TX-3352, Creswell-Rozzle House). But the kiln is even nearer the new ranch headquarters house, begun in 1904. The house is located on the bluff just above the kiln to the north and, though of wood frame construction, it has stone piers laid up in lime mortar (see HABS No. TX-3351). Another building project which may be associated with the kiln was the construction of a series of concrete silos, under the direction of a member of the Miller family, particularly one constructed at the nearby Elm Pasture tenant farm in 1914. This silo was given an exterior lime-wash coat (see HAER No. TX-15). Finally, the kiln could have functioned during the construction of the W.P.A. bridges along the old ranch road from Leaday to the Hill community. At one point, the road skirts the bluff above the kiln; and only a few hundred feet away is the W.P.A. dynamite storage facility used during the bridge construction (see HABS No. TX-3360).

II. THE LIME KILN

A. Description

The kiln is located on a shelf of natural stone outcropping below a steep bluff over the Colorado River. The workplace was placed against the cliff, a combination of natural limestone formations and stacked rocks. These large stones, many of them boulders, were placed in a plan of A rough ovoid configuration, the interior space measuring approximately 10 feet by 15 feet. Standing walls at the front, or river face, of the structure measure about 4 feet high, and those at the rear about 3 feet high above the interior deposition. Several of the large rocks still retained traces of fire on their blackened surfaces. Two archaeological test pits are located within the ring of stones.

B. Present Condition and Future of the Site

In 1979, the Texas Water Commission granted permission to the Colorado River Municipal Water District, an entity based in Big Spring, to construct a large dam on the Colorado River. The site chosen was a location several miles downstream from Leaday, sixteen miles below the confluence of the Colorado and Concho rivers. Early in the planning stages, a program was developed to address environmental concerns, including the impact of the proposed flood area on prehistoric and historic cultural resources. In 1980-1981, a survey of historic cultural resources was conducted by Freeman and Freeman, under contract to Espey, Huston and Associates, a firm of environmental consultants in Austin. Subsequently, a number of other studies and amplifications of previous studies have been conducted. In early 1988, an Albuquerque, New Mexico, firm of environmental scientists, Mariah Associates, Inc., began further assessment of the area of the flood plain, including various archaeological investigations and assessments. Mariah has also acted in the role of coordinator of related projects, including this project, the recording of nineteen endangered historic sites in the confluence area for the Historic American Buildings Survey and the Historic American Engineering Record. The sites were selected from a list compiled under the guidance of the Texas Historical Commission.

Construction was finished on the dam in the late summer of 1989. Called the Stacy Dam and Reservoir, the project will inundate approximately 19,200 acres and possibly all of the sites included in this study. The lime kiln is surprisingly intact, considering its proximity to the Colorado River and its periodic flooding through the years. The site will be inundated as the Stacy Reservoir gradually fills. Permanent easement to the site was granted to the Colorado River Municipal Water District in 1986 by the Miller heirs. [7]

III. ENDNOTES

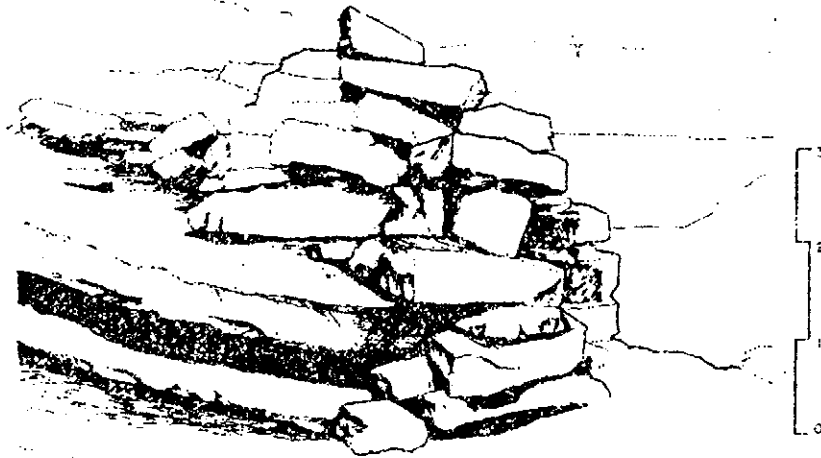
- [1] Reference is to Coleman County Courthouse, Deed Record, vol. B, 572 and 573; Fort bend School Lands to William H. Day, April 9, 1878.
- [2] For a concise history of the activities of William H. Day in the formation of the cattle industry in Texas following the Civil War, see James Padgitt, "Ranching in Coleman County," published in Coleman County Historical Commission, A History of Coleman County and Its People, vol. 1, (San Angelo, Texas: Anchor Publishing Company, 1985), 44-48. For fuller historical information on William and Mabel Doss Day and for the documentation of the deeds of trust and the sequence of original and subsequent owners of the Day Ranch, see HABS Nos. TX-3351 and TX-3362. This period (1889-1906) in the life of Mabel Doss Day Lea and the fate of the Day Ranch in these years is best covered in Freeman 4-9 through 4-11 and 6-1 through 6-7.
- [3] Coleman County Courthouse, Deed Record vol. 64, 7-11; Willie Mabel Day Padgitt to Jo Zach Miller, October 1, 1907.
- [4] For a concise history of Leaday, see Glen Wilson's essay published in Coleman County Historical Commission, vol. I, 268-269.
- [5] For a discussion of the early schools in the Leaday vicinity, see Ralph Terry's essay, "Leaday Schools," published in Coleman county Historical Commission, vol. 1, 152.
- [6] Freeman, 6-7/
- [7] Coleman County Courthouse, District Clerk's Office; Commerce State Bank of Kansas City (trustee for Jo Zach Miller IV et al), grants of permanent easement to Colorado River Municipal Water District, December 22, 1986. This judgement on condemnation proceedings is not yet filed on record.

IV. SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Sketch plan and detail

V. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was sponsored by Mariah Associates, Inc., archaeologists; recorded under the direction of Greg Kendrick, HABS regional coordinator, Denver. The project was completed during the summer of 1989 at the project field office at Houston and College Station, Texas. Project supervisor was Graham B. Luhn, AIA, architect; project architectural historian was Gus Hamblett, Texas A&M University; intern architects were Debbie Fernandez and Paul Neidinger; student architects were Brian Dougan, Robert Holton, Janna Johnson, Wayne Jones, and Pat Sparks, Texas A&M University; project photographer was Paul Neidinger; photographic processing by Laura McFarlane.



VIEWING EAST AT LIME KILN AND BASE OF CLIFF

